DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 360 HE 020 755

TITLE To Act as a System. A Statement by the SHEEO Role and Mission Task Force.
INSTITUTION State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.
PUB DATE 14 Jul 87
NOTE 7p.
AVAILABLE FROM State Higher Education Executive Officers, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 310, Denver, CO 80295.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Board of Education Role; *College Role; *Higher Education; *Institutional Mission; Position Papers; *State Boards of Education

ABSTRACT

Recommendations concerning college role and mission that were made by the National Governors' Association (NGA) in 1986 are addressed, along with the concept of system effectiveness in higher education. In its report, "Time for Results," the National Governors' Association Task Force on College Quality asked states to clearly define the role and mission of each public institution. The Role and Mission Task Force of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) Association endorses the NGA recommendations. A better division of labor across institutions will foster not only quality but efficiency and public accountability. State boards, which articulate a vision for the system as a whole, also need clearly defined roles and missions. One of the most important goals of state boards is to understand and interpret the needs of the state. State boards also play a vital role in breaking down the organizational barriers that impede student access and achievement. It is suggested that an effective board: has a sense of its own identity, purposes, and priorities; knows what the state needs and wants for higher education; acts to acquire or reallocate resources to meet state needs; communicates effectively with key constituencies; and draws conflicting interests together. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED287360

TO ACT AS A SYSTEM

A Statement by the SHEEO
Role and Mission Task Force

July 14, 1987

State Higher Education Executive Officers
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 310
Denver, Colorado 80295
(303) 830-3685

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
SHEEO
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HE 020 755

PREFACE

In 1986 Richard Wagner, Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education and 1986-87 SHEEO President, appointed a task force to examine the plans being developed in the states aimed at "mission differentiation." This task was undertaken because of the intense interest of state political leaders in the subject and SHEEO's own desire to assist its members in sharing effective strategies.

The statement which follows is the result of deliberations of the task force during the apst year. It consists of two parts: the first responds to the recommendations made in 1986 by the National Governors Association which call upon the states to clearlydefine the role and mission of instittuions; the second is aimed primarily at our own board members to promote a better understanding of the concept of system effectiveness, which we believe to be essential to good public policy for higher education.

The members of the task force were:

Wm. Rolfe Kerr (Chair), Utah
Molly C. Broad, Arizona
William B. Coulter, Ohio
Gordon K. Davies, Virginia
Warren H. Fox, Nevada
Thomas E. Furlong, Florida
Stanley Z. Koplik, Kansas
Carrol Krause, Montana
John Richardson, North Dakota
Albert J. Simone, Hawaii
A. Robert Thoeny, Washington
Blenda J. Wilson, Colorado

To Act as a System

A Statement by the SHEEO
Role and Mission Task Force

In its report, Time for Results, the National Governors' Association Task Force on College Quality called upon the states to "clearly define the role and mission of each public higher education institution." In many states, this is the statutory or constitutional responsibility of the state coordinating and governing boards that make up the SHEEO membership.

This task force, through its deliberations and writings during the past year, has elaborated upon the complex endeavor of state planning and coordination. We endorse the spirit of the recommendations found in the NGA report and its emphasis on clearly focused institutional missions. A better division of labor across all institutions, public and private, will foster not only quality but also efficiency and public accountability.

The statutory responsibilities of boards vary widely among the states and these mandates will dictate the role played by coordinating boards, system governing boards and individual campuses in the process of determining institutional missions. Even where there is a mandate to develop role and mission statements, these statements are sometimes disregarded in the budgeting and financing policies of the executive and legislative branches of state government.

Statewide and systemwide plans are best developed through a collaborative process involving all of the major interest groups in the state, including students, faculty and administrators, political representatives, representatives of independent colleges and universities and the general public. Widespread involvement in planning creates a sense of ownership and commitment to the process and the product. Through properly structured opportunities for involvement, all participants begin to develop an appreciation for the mission of the overall system as well as its components.

Role and mission statements usually provide a general narrative which includes some statement of purpose, a profile of present activities and projections for the future. This last element is often the most controversial for it can reflect the institution's aspirations and destiny — what it will or will not be. Because of this problem, some state boards have chosen to separate statements of aspiration from descriptions of current programs.

The primary advantage of role and mission statements is that they provide a framework for making decisions about future growth. Boards can be guided by this articulated philosophy rather than be swayed by short-term or parochial interests. On the negative side, these statements can be the source of great conflict within the state.

The enunciation of role and mission statements in a state plan is one but certainly not the only way to achieve effective division of labor. Academic program approval and review, budget review, oversight of governance and reorganization, faculty promotion and tenure policies and facilities planning and approval were all cited by SHEEO members as important instruments for maintaining coherent institutional missions. In addition, we found increasing use of funding mechanisms and the budget process to send signals about new statewide priorities. We also found many state boards involved in strategic planning to identify future issues that need to be addressed. Whether through role and mission statements or other devices, a state board should seek a reasonably consistent philosophy to guide its decisions about enrollments, programs and funding. This philosophy will communicate to the public a coherent view of the system as a whole.

System Effectiveness

Just as institutions need clearly defined roles and missions, so do our own state boards. It is uniquely the role of the state board to articulate a vision for the system as a whole, and to give coherence and direction to a highly diverse set of activities that constitute the state's total higher education resources.

The constituents of the state board — elected officials, campus leaders, and the public at-large — should perceive state coordinating and governing boards as addressing the most important, and often the most difficult, issues facing the state. Even when done with careful thought and analysis, this may not always bring cheers of approval. But it will insure that the state receives the systemwide perspective so necessary to good public policy.

The most effective state boards are not only those that plan and lead, but also those that adapt to changing circumstances and communicate effectively. It is not necessary (or possible) to control everything to achieve the desirable results. System offices can act like thermostats, watching key measures in order to judge the health of the system as a whole.

The goals that a state board sets for itself should reflect its unique status of standing between the public at large and the institutions that carry out the teaching, research, and public service functions of higher education. One of the most important goals of state boards should be to understand and interpret the needs of the state. Historically, that has meant considerable time in negotiating equity and access issues. In recent years, many state-level initiatives have been aimed at improving the quality of undergraduate instruction, especially in such critically important fields as teacher education.

Standing at the border between sectors of education, state boards also play a vital role in breaking down the organizational barriers that impede student access and achievement. This means increasing emphasis on collaborative relationships between higher education and the schools, between one campus and another, and between higher education institutions and community and business organizations. The importance of these collaborative relationships is apparent in the substantive recommendations made by SHEEO's other task forces on minority student achievement, school-college issues and assessment.

It is not our intent to enumerate a complete list of goals for state boards. The priorities that systems and states set for themselves will differ according to the historical development of the system, the resources available and the perceptions of needed reforms by state political leaders. However, we do suggest some criteria by which each of us can judge our own effectiveness. An effective board:

1. Has a sense of its own identity, purposes, beliefs and priorities;
2. Knows what the state needs and wants with respect to higher education and when the system does not meet those state needs;
3. Acts to acquire or reallocate the necessary resources to meet state needs;
4. Communicates effectively with key constituencies;
5. Draws conflicting interests together in a way that insures credibility and support for the system;
6. Corrects deficiencies in a manner that is consistent with its own statutory or constitutional responsibilities and the norms of the academic community.

Such a board will be both an effective advocate of higher education and an accountable trustee of the public interest.

This statement was developed collectively by the SHEEO Role and Mission Task Force. An elaboration of the statement can be found in the three background papers developed for the task force and available from the SHEEO office. These are:

Role and Mission Development: A Comparison of Different Approaches by Don A. Carpenter (Utah System of Higher Education)

Mission Maintenance: Tools for Change and the Consultative Process by J. Kent Caruthers (MGT of America Inc.)

System Strategy and Effectiveness by Ellen Earle Chaffee (North Dakota State Board of Higher Education)